

Parenting the First Year

Months 5-6

How Baby Is Changing

Your baby has lots of energy! She seems always to be moving when she's not asleep. Many 5-month-olds can move around by rolling or wiggling. You'll need extra patience to keep up with your infant.

Your baby knows her mom and dad from strangers and may cry when one of you leaves. Don't sneak out! Tell her you will be back. Even though she doesn't understand your words, she understands the tone of your voice and needs to be reassured you'll return.

Soon she will show signs of being afraid of people she doesn't know well. Let her get used to new people slowly.

She may like toys that make noises now. Ring a bell or squeeze a squeaky toy and watch her try to find out where the sound came from. Then let her try it alone. Say different sounds. Does she copy you?

Your baby has discovered her feet and may love to suck on her toes. She is getting stronger and may start to push up on her hands and knees. For safety, remove toys that are strung across the crib, like crib gyms.

From this age on, your baby will be very interested in toys that can be touched, looked at, chewed, sucked and banged together.

Get Together With Others

Some parents make a regular date to be with other parents and babies. Once a week, two or three parents and their babies may get together for an hour or more.

Babies enjoy these play groups. Parents may enjoy them more! You can watch your babies grow together and learn from each other.

Interact for emergency child care, too. All parents have days when the baby irritates them. It helps to have a friend you can call on for an hour or so if you need to run an errand or even if you just need some time alone.

No one raises a baby without help. Who can *you* count on?

Schedule time for yourself alone and with other adults. Taking care of yourself makes the job of parenting less stressful.

Safety for Baby

Your baby needs to explore. Exploration is how your baby makes exciting discoveries and exercises his developing muscles. He is starting to get into things and may get a hold of something you don't want him to have. Since everything he picks up goes into his mouth, it's time to think about safety.

One way to guide your child is to **babyproof** your home (see page 4). This prevents him from getting hurt or breaking things. It makes sense to babyproof rather than to follow him around saying "no" to everything.

Another form of child guidance is to **redirect**. This means moving the baby away from a hazard (such as a lamp cord) to someplace safe.

You can **substitute** by interesting your baby in a toy that *can* be played with, then gently removing the item you don't want him to have.

Don't slap your baby's hands or yell at him. *He can't control his behavior yet*, plus he may learn that it is OK to hit. Attempt to keep him out of danger rather than punishing him for getting into it. Try babyproofing, redirecting and substituting instead.

Your Baby Wants You To Know by the End of Six Months

How I Grow

- I rock, roll and twist my body.
- I kick my feet and suck on my toes.
- I stand up if you hold me under my arms, jump up and down, and stamp my feet.
- I have pretty good aim when I grab something.
- I can roll over.

How I Talk

- I watch your mouth and try to imitate you when you talk to me.
- I make sounds like ee, ah, ooh, dada, bye-bye, mama.
- I babble to myself, to my toys and to people. I get attention that way!

How I Respond

- I may cry when I see strangers.
- I smile at faces and voices that I know.
- I look around when I hear sounds. Loud noises may scare me and hurt my hearing.
- I make sounds and interrupt your conversations because I want attention.
- I also may look away or give other cues when I want to be left alone.
- I want to touch, hold, turn, shake and taste everything.
- I put a lot of energy into everything I do.

How I Understand

- I recognize my name when I hear it.
- I remember what I just did.

How I Feel

- I usually cling to you when you hold me.
- I stop crying when you talk to me.
- I show fear, anger and disgust.

How You Can Help Me Learn

- Talk to me in complete sentences about what you're doing.
- Face me so I can watch your lips when you talk. Then I can try to imitate you.
- Play peekaboo with me.
- Let me listen to the radio for short periods of time. I'm too young for TV. Let me have quiet times, too.
- Respond to my signals that I'm anxious to play, tired of playing or ready for something new.
- Give me things to explore through sight, such as cloth or plastic picture books, plastic bottles with colorful objects inside or visual toys that promote language.

He or She, Him or Her

These newsletters give equal time to both sexes. That's why we take turns referring to children as "he" or "she." Keep in mind that we are talking about all children when we use "he" or "she."

REMINDER: Your baby should have a health-care provider visit at 6 months of age.

Children are very different from each other. Don't worry if your child manages some skills earlier or later than other children. Most children tend to focus on one area, like physical or language development, and pay less attention to other areas. Get to know your unique baby and celebrate each new skill with him!

What Is Your Baby Like?

You're probably now noticing your baby's individual personality. Temperament is one part of her personality. Research on temperament shows that babies may differ from birth in these ways:

Activity Level — Some babies are very active and interested in everything. Others are quiet and happy with one activity.

Mood — Some babies are usually happy and content, while others are more serious and grumpy. Of course, all babies become grumpy with pain or sickness.

Rhythms — Some babies eat, sleep, even have bowel movements at around the same time each day. Others never do things at the same times from one day to the next.

Persistence and Attention Span — Some babies quit easily when a task is challenging and easily can be redirected. Others lock in on tasks and may be more frustrated with interruptions.

Sensitivity — Some babies are very aware of noises, temperatures, lights, tastes and textures. Others don't react much to such changes.

Adaptability — Some babies adapt quickly to changes in their environment. Others don't deal well with surprises or changes in routine.

Approach/Withdrawal — Some babies shy away from new things and need time to adjust, but other babies seek them out.

Perceptiveness — Some babies notice the tiniest change in their surroundings. Others can sleep through thunderstorms.

Intensity of Reaction — Some babies whimper quietly if they're cold or hungry. Others howl as soon as they're unhappy.

These nine traits make up your baby's temperament. Different degrees of each trait make up her temperament style.

Flexible or easy babies are somewhat active, have regular body functions, adapt easily to change and are usually happy.

Fearful or cautious babies have variable body functions, pull away from new things a little and adapt slowly to change.

Fiesty or more spirited babies tend to have irregular body functions, withdraw from new situations, adapt slowly to change and react very strongly.

These are only tendencies. Babies may have a mix of traits and not fit a specific style.

If you're having a difficult time with your baby, remember:

1. Your baby is not difficult on purpose and is not a bad baby. Like any baby, she will grow up to be bright and loving with love and support from you.
2. This is the "style" your baby was born with, but it may adapt as she grows and you learn more about reading her signals.
3. A feisty or cautious baby may need a more caring and patient parent who will accept the infant and help her learn.

Introduce new things slowly so she gets used to them. Try new foods a week later if she doesn't like them at first, for example. Praise her when something new is accepted. She needs to *learn* how to adapt.

Getting To Know Your Baby

Research on personality has found that babies often differ in ways indicated by answers to the following questions. Besides answering the questions yourself, it also might be interesting to have other people who spend regular time with your baby answer these questions in order to share perceptions.

1. How active is your baby? Is she able to sit still? How long can she play at one activity?
2. When your baby has been fed and is not tired, what is his general mood? Happy? Serious? Grumpy?
3. Is your baby on a regular schedule? Does she eat, take naps or have bowel movements at the same time each day?
4. How long is your baby's attention span? Does he give up easily?
5. How sensitive is your baby to noise, light and changes in temperature? Does she wake up easily or could she sleep through a thunderstorm?
6. How well does your baby adapt to new situations, such as a new environment or food? Does he cope well with changes in routine?
7. Does your baby enjoy new things, like seeing people or different places?
8. Does your baby notice when her surroundings have changed?
9. How intensely does your baby react when unhappy — with a whimper or a howl?



How Baby Thinks

The way your baby thinks is changing. She is beginning to understand that things exist even when they're not in sight. When she was younger, it was "out of sight, out of mind."

As your baby reaches 5 and 6 months, watch how she reacts when things disappear from view. Does she lean over to look for things that were dropped?

Your baby is learning to understand her world, and you are her first teacher.

Have fun with your baby, and be patient as she learns to think about different things.

Show your baby a favorite toy, then turn her away so she can't see it. If she turns her head or body to look for the toy, encourage her and help her get it.

Show her a toy, then cover it (slowly at first) with a cloth or cup. Does she try to pull the cover off?

Play peekaboo to help her learn that you will come back when you go away. She is learning that you exist even when you can't be seen. But she may still get upset when you leave. Be sure to tell her goodbye and that you'll be back. Don't sneak out to fool her. That will scare her. Your baby is learning to trust you.

If your baby doesn't want to play these games now, wait a few weeks and try again.

Babyproof Your Home

As a parent, it's your job to make your baby's world a safe place in which to learn and grow. Babyproofing helps protect her from dangerous things in your home — and helps protect *your* precious objects from damage. Start by getting on your hands and knees and looking around your home from a baby's eye view. For more information, visit www.aapcc.org.

Watch out for: Small or sharp things

Anything your baby can reach will go into her mouth. Keep floors and tables clear of coins, cigarettes, dust balls, paper clips, staples and anything smaller than 1 1/2 inches around that you wouldn't want her to eat.

Keep knives, scissors and razor blades out of reach of small children. Throw out broken glass and other sharp objects right away. Don't leave them in open wastebaskets.

Electrical things

Cover unused electrical outlets with plastic plugs and move furniture in front of outlets. Keep lamp cords and extension cords out of the way behind furniture. Move fans up high.

In the kitchen, don't leave cords dangling. Turn pot handles toward the back of the stove.

Poisons

Move cleaning supplies to a high place. Put childproof locks on cupboards with dangerous chemicals. Children drink things just to try them, even if they taste bad. Some plants are poisonous, so keep them all out of reach.

If you drink alcohol at a party, pour leftover drinks and beer down the sink. It takes very little alcohol to poison a child. Cigarettes also can poison children who eat them.

Medicine cabinets should be locked. Don't take medicine in front of your child. Never tell her medicine is "candy." *In large amounts, even aspirin, Tylenol or vitamins can kill.*

What to do if a poisoning occurs...

1. Stay calm.
2. Immediately call your poison center and have the following information ready:
 - Child's condition, age and weight
 - Product containers or bottles
 - Time that the poisoning occurred
 - Your name and telephone number
3. Follow the instructions that the poison center gives you.

You may want to keep activated charcoal in your home, but **DO NOT** give it to your child without first contacting the Poison Control Center at 800.222.1222 or your health-care provider for treatment instructions.

Poison Help stickers are available by calling 701.328.2959.



(continued on page 5)

(Babyproof, continued from page 4)

Plastic

The plastic bags that hold groceries or cover dry-cleaned clothes are very dangerous. Your baby can get a bag over her mouth and nose and suffocate. Babies also can choke on balloons. Don't let children younger than 6 play with balloons unsupervised, and never give a child an uninflated balloon. Carefully store all balloons, and throw broken balloons out immediately.

Stairs

Install safety gates at the top and bottom of open stairways, and be sure to keep them fastened at all times. Gates that are attached to the wall provide better protection than pressure-type gates.

Valuables

Put breakable items out of reach. Your baby doesn't understand what is and is not breakable. Children are curious, so adults need to remove tempting items to avoid constantly saying "no." Make sure tablecloths or runners don't hang over the edge so your baby can pull off valuables.

Pets

Pets can be excellent companions and meet the emotional needs of children and others for love and affection. Caring for pets also gives children an opportunity to learn how to treat and be responsible for others. However, since animals can pass on disease to people, some guidelines for protecting the health and safety of children should be followed.

- All pets, whether kept indoors or outside, should be in good health, show no evidence of disease, and be friendly toward children.
- Dogs or cats should be immunized appropriately (check with the veterinarian) and be kept on flea, tick and worm control programs.
- Pet living quarters should be kept clean. All pet waste should be disposed of immediately. Litter boxes should never, ever be accessible to children.
- Adults always should be present when children play with pets.
- Children should be taught how to behave around a pet. They should be taught not to provoke the pet or remove the pet's food. They should always keep their faces away from a pet's mouth, beak or claws.
- Some children have allergies and should not have pets.
- Children and adults always should wash their hands thoroughly with soap and water after handling pets, pet items or their droppings.
- All reptiles carry salmonella. Therefore, small reptiles that might be handled by children — including turtles, snakes and iguanas — can easily transmit salmonella to them.
- Some pets — particularly "exotic" pets such as some turtles, iguanas, some rodents, venomous or aggressive snakes, spiders and tropical fish — may not be appropriate for children. Check with a veterinarian if you are unsure whether a particular pet is appropriate for children.



Throwing Things on the Floor

Don't be surprised if your 5- to 10-month-old gets carried away dropping things on the floor. Your baby is experimenting, watching to see where the things go when they fall! He doesn't do it just to make you pick the items up — although that may become part of the fun.

If a meal gets too messy because he throws food on the floor, take the food away and give him a toy instead. He probably isn't hungry anymore if he's playing. Put a vinyl tablecloth, shower curtain or newspaper under the high chair to make cleanup easier.

Drinking From a Cup

Some 5-month-old babies are ready to start learning to drink from a cup. Choose a non-breakable cup with or without a lid or handle.

- Give your baby the empty cup to hold and to look at.
- Let him watch you and his brothers or sisters drinking from a cup.
- Put a spoonful of water or juice in the cup and let him help you tip the cup.

As he gets better, put more liquid in the cup and encourage him to hold it. Be ready for spills and drips! If he rejects the cup, do not force it. He has a lot of time to learn later.

Children's Special Health Services (CSHS)

Does your baby have a medical or developmental condition that is expected to last more than 12 months? CSHS may be able to help. CSHS pays for pediatric specialty care for eligible children, provides multidisciplinary clinics that help families manage their child's chronic health condition, and supports community-based care coordination services to help families access services for their child with special health care needs. For more information, call Children's Special Health Services at 800.755.2714.

NEVER
NEVER
NEVER
Shake a Baby

Can Your Baby Hear?

As many as three of every 1,000 babies are born in the United States each year with hearing loss. Hearing problems need to be identified as early as possible so that you may take actions that give your baby the best chance to develop normal speech and language. For more information or questions about an audiologist (professional trained in the field of hearing) please contact North Dakota First Sounds at 800.233.1737 or visit www.ndcpd.org/1stsounds.

New Foods for Baby

Continue to add one food at a time. Give each new food for three to four days in a row before starting another food. For example: give pears three days, then carrots three days, then peaches three days, and so on. These single-ingredient foods are best at first. By giving one food at a time, if your baby gets a tummy ache or a rash, you'll know which food may be to blame. After she has tried each food, you can give those foods in the mixed version, like mixed vegetables or cereal.

If she doesn't like a food, try again in a week or two. Remember this is a new taste and texture in her mouth. It can take as many as 11 times for a baby to decide to like a new food.

Babies just starting on solids need food that are pureed or mashed to make them very soft and fine textured. You can buy baby food in a jar or you can make your own.

Baby Food in a Jar

When using baby food in jars, be sure the safety button on top is down when you buy it. Listen for the "pop" when you open the jar so you know the jar wasn't opened before.

Do not feed baby from the jar. Place a small amount of baby food from the jar into a dish for feeding to baby. Saliva on baby's spoon will spoil any leftover food, so throw out any food left in the dish. Refrigerate the food left in the jar, and use it up within three days.

Homemade Baby Foods

Use a blender, food mill or sieve to make baby food yourself. If using raw fruits and vegetables, wash and peel them and remove the seeds. If using canned fruits and vegetables, use those that are not high in salt and sugar. Use cooking methods that leave the food soft and don't add salt, sugar or fat. If needed, add extra liquid like cooking liquid, formula, or juice to puree the food smoothly.

To save time, make a large batch of baby food, freeze it in ice cube trays, pop out the cubes and store them in a freezer bag. Thaw or heat a cube to make a serving.

Clean hands and equipment are very important when handling baby food. Wash your hands and all cooking equipment in hot, soapy water and air dry. Call your county extension office, public health nutritionist or WIC office for more information about making your own baby food.



A Few Words About Teething...

By now, your baby may be teething. The lower front teeth are usually the first to appear. Teething occasionally may cause mild irritability, crying, low-grade temperature (but not over 100 degrees), excessive drooling and a desire to chew on something hard. The gums around your baby's new teeth may swell and be sore and tender. To help ease your baby's discomfort, try gently rubbing the gums with a clean finger or offer a teething ring. If your child has a fever higher than 100 degrees, it's probably not because he's teething, and you should call your physician.

My Child-Care Provider and I Don't Agree

Parents often have to make some compromises between "ideal" child care and the actual choices that are available. Some compromises, such as a distant location, you may simply have to live with.

But if you have other concerns, you may be able to work them out with the child-care provider. Every family raises children a little differently. If you want your provider to do things differently with your child, talk with the provider about it. Most providers will welcome this, knowing that she or he and you are partners who need to cooperate.

Saying "You shouldn't do that with the children" may offend the provider or start an argument. Instead, say, "In our family, we prefer to do it this way." This shows you know that other parents may choose to do things differently from you. A good provider can then listen, even if she or he doesn't agree with you.

Parents and providers usually can work things out, but sometimes your child-rearing ideas will be different. In that case, you could call your Child Care Resource and Referral for ideas about other child-care options.

Fargo Area	800.941.7003 or 218.299.7025
Bismarck Area	888.223.1510 or 701.223.1510
Minot Area	800.450.7801 or 701.838.7800
Jamestown Area	888.767.0350 or 701.252.0350
Devils Lake Area	701.662.6589
Grand Forks Area	888.778.3435 or 701.772.3435

What Do Providers Complain About?

Parents who are late picking up their children.

Parents who are late paying their child-care bills.

Moms and Dads

Moms and dads — Is one more important to a baby than the other? The answer is no. Moms and dads are both very important to an infant. An involved, caring and loving parent is the most important person in a child's life.

Moms tend to get more involved in caregiving activities, and dads tend to get more into play activities. One is not better than the other. Moms and dads can be different in their styles, yet both are equally important to their child.

Parents should not be in competition over who is the better parent. Parents do not need to limit their activities to more stereotyped roles. Babies enjoy playing with and being comforted by both parents.

Single parents should not assume they cannot succeed without a partner. Children need adults who invest their time and energy. The structure of the family is not the most important factor.

Your baby is due for 6 month shots:

- DTAP (diphtheria, tetanus, acellular, pertussis)
- Hib (*Haemophilus influenzae* – type B)
Depending on type of vaccine, received at 2 & 4 months of age.
- Hep B (hepatitis B)
- IPV (inactivated polio vaccine)
- Influenza vaccine is recommended, but not required, for all children ages 6 to 23 months.



NORTH DAKOTA
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ND Toll-free: 800.472.2286
701.328.2493

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Right Track

Right Track is a free program for families with children from birth through age 2 that provides children with the best possible start. Right Track provides developmental screenings, ideas for stimulating your child's development, information and referrals to local, state and national organizations.

Contact us to learn more about Right Track at:

Williston	800.231.7724 or 701.774.4634
Minot	888.470.6968 or 701.857.8663
Devils Lake	888.607.8610 or 701.665.2200
Grand Forks	888.256.6742 or 701.795.3000
Fargo	888.342-4900 or 701.298.4606
Jamestown	800.260.1310 (ext. 6416) or 701.253.6416
Bismarck	888.328.2662 or 701.328.8985
Dickinson	888.227.7525 or 701.227.7630
ND State Office	800.755.8529



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